

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusive Practice

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Part 1

Inclusive education is a term that is used often in education settings, but with little knowledge of what it means or why it is important, not just for the students in the setting but also for the wider school community. Brown (2016) describes inclusivity as a setting where the teaching, learning, achievements, wellbeing, and attitude of every student matters. Welsh Government (2021) however describe inclusive education as where the majority of young people with an additional learning need (ALN) are supported to engage in mainstream education and where the education setting meets the needs of students with ALN. With this description in mind, you can begin to question are the education settings in Wales truly inclusive to all students.

The definition of disability as described in section 6(1) of the Equality Act 2010 is when a person has a physical or mental impairment that has a long term and substantial effect on the persons ability to do normal day to day activities. This definition could be seen to adopt the medical model of disability, this model looks at the persons disability first and sees their disability as their barrier to accessing provision and being able to participate fully in society (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, ND). In contrast The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006) defines disability as a person with impairments and their interactions with environmental barriers and attitudinal barriers that stops them from their participation in society on an equal basis to others. This description could be identified as using the social model of disability, which was created by people with disabilities. This model, in contradiction to the medical model, follows the idea that the person is disabled by the barriers in society, not with their impairment or difference (Disability Rights UK, 2025). This definition of disability was adopted by The Welsh Government in 2002, who state that they are committed to the 'cultural shift' that would be required to ensure that all areas of work by The Welsh Government follow the social model of disability (Welsh Government, 2023).

Welsh Government (2022) found that 23,640 university students in Wales had a recognised Disability under the definition of the Equality Act 2010. This equates to 19.5% of the university students studying in Wales in 2022. For this reason, it could be seen as a priority to universities to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their students, with universities being dedicated to support disabled students to reach their full potential (UWTSD, ND a), this follows UNCRPD

(2006), which states in Article 24 – Education that the state parties must acknowledge the rights of the person with disabilities and must ensure that they provide an inclusive education for all levels of study to help the students to reach their full potential.

Knowles (2018) highlight how every student is different with their own set of individual needs and so in order for an academic institution to be truly inclusive then the needs of all of the students need to be met. All student in Wales with an additional learning need, up to the age of twenty-five, will have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) (Snap Cymru, N.D). This is a legal document that outlines the additional needs of the student, the support that they require and their goals that they would like to achieve. Each IDP contains a one-page profile of the student which gives the student the opportunity to voice their wants and needs when it comes to their education, letting the professionals who work with them what is important to them as a person. An IDP is maintained by the education institution and is reviewed annually. As the IDP is reviewed annually, it can be changed to suit the changing needs of the student. The university has a legal requirement to where possible meet the needs of the student that are identified in the IDP, to support the student in reaching their full potential.

The Additional Learning Code for Wales 2021 (16.6) identifies the universities responsibility to support students and help decide if they have an ALN. For universities this could be by screening for specific learning difficulties and supporting the student through the assessment for example.

Educators within the further education sector must adhere to the Professional standards for further education teachers, work-based learning practitioners and adult learning practitioners in Wales (Welsh Government, 2023). These include standards in promoting diversity and inclusivity in the learning environment, demonstrating a commitment to the learners in your setting, their wellbeing and safety and demonstrating dignity and respect towards others. These standards are important to all students but are especially important when working with those with additional learning needs, not only for those students with ALN but also to role model attitudes and behaviours to all students demonstrating respect and inclusivity in all lessons. It is the responsibility of the lecturing staff to ensure that all learning opportunities are accessible for the students in the setting, and to make differentiations where necessary.

As shown, there are many policies and legislation documents in place to safeguard people who have a disability both in the community and in education settings. It is the responsibility of everybody in the community to ensure that inclusivity for all, and that diversity is both respected and celebrated.

Part 2

For the purpose of this section, I will be answering as a lecturer at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) on the Education Studies course.

1. Rhys/Angharad

I have had a student come to me today to discuss concerns that lecturers have been having regarding the dropping of their grades and engagement with the course. During this tutorial they disclosed how they were struggling with post sixteen education, the work involved and the social aspect, they also disclosed that they feel that they are trans and have been experimenting with clothing and have wished to be known by their chosen name, Angharad.

One of Angharad's concerns was regarding the reaction from their peers and lecturing staff. I first of all reassured them that the staff within the university are welcoming to all students and that the university is a safe space where staff and students can develop in a safe and inclusive learning community (UWTSD, 2020), however if they were made to feel uncomfortable or that they are being bullied or harassed then the university has systems in place where it can be reported and dealt with in a sensitive manner. This is meeting the professional standard "Value and promote diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion" (Welsh Government, 2023) by challenging any discriminatory behaviour and promoting diversity and inclusivity.

Angharad stated that they had not discussed this with anybody else, including family members and was wanting some support and advice. I did signpost Angharad to the student wellbeing team and offered to support them in filling out the self-referral form to access wellbeing support. We also looked together at the student support section of the university website to look at other support that is available to them, for example Togetherall (2025) which is a peer support network where you can share worries that you may have with people experiencing similar challenges. I also suggested that when Angharad was ready that they may wish to contact the UWTSD LGBTQ+ society which is a safe space for all students (UWTSD Student Union, ND). This could offer Angharad some in person peer support. As they felt that they have felt like an outsider and difference this could possibly be a way of connecting with others to feel more a part of the university community. This is promoting the professional standard "Demonstrate commitment to learners, their learning, safety and well-being"

(Welsh Government, 2023) by ensuring that the wellbeing and the safety of the student is paramount.

As Angharad stated that they now wanted to be known by their chosen name I first asked if they would like me to share this with their other lecturers to make them aware, or if they would prefer to contact them themselves. I also suggested that when they were ready, they could amend their name on the UWTSD myTSD page, which would then update their records showing their chosen name.

Finally, I checked on the wellbeing of Angharad as this was the first time that they had disclosed their feelings, and it was important that they felt that they were safe and in a positive place mentally moving forward. If I did have any concerns, then I informed Angharad that I could put in a concern with the safeguarding team on their behalf to ensure that they are safe and supported.

2. Iwan

Iwan is a student in one of my classes and had come to speak to me because he is struggling with finances, he works part time, and his family are unable to help him more than they already are. He has been offered more hours in work but is concerned about the impact on his studies, he is already falling behind.

Firstly, I supported Iwan and reassured him that there is help available, however I am not the best person to speak to about specific support. I directed Iwan to the money support page on the UWTSD website (UWTSD, ND b), which has budget calculation tools to support a student who is struggling with their finances, and also provide access to a free budgeting course that could help him to budget his money more effectively. The link is also on the page the contact the Money Support Team who will be able to advise Iwan on support that is available to him as well as assisting him in applying for additional bursaries and grants.

I informed Iwan that there are several bursaries from the university that he may be eligible for. These included the UWTSD financial support fund and the course cost bursary which can help towards course costs. As Iwan is the first generation in his family to attend university then he may also be eligible for the Institute Bursary (UWTSD, ND c). but reassured Iwan that

the financial support for students is there to help students who are struggling with their finances while they are studying, and that the money support team will be able to guide him towards the right financial support for his circumstances.

As Richardson et al (2017) described there is a relationship between financial difficulties and mental health challenges in university students, I suggested that Iwan access wellbeing support from the university's wellbeing team (UWTSD, ND d). This supports the Welsh Government (2023) professional standard "Demonstrate commitment to learners, their learning, safety and well-being" by ensuring that the wellbeing of Iwan is being maintained through specialist support. I also asked if he would like me to speak to the other lecturers on the course to make them aware that he is facing challenges and may need extra support, I gave Iwan the option, demonstrating the professional standard " Demonstrate dignity, courtesy and respect towards others" (Welsh Government, 2023) by offering support as well as respecting his privacy by asking if he would like me to pass on his information to his other lecturers, understanding that now he is accessing support he may not want to share with other lecture staff that he is facing challenges.

I suggested the Iwan visit the UWTSD student union as they have "give it a go" who provide a program of events that are deigned for students on a budget, providing low-cost activities (UWTSD Students Union, ND b). This would give Iwan the opportunity to be involved in student life and feel part of the student community while staying in a budget.

I also put Iwan in touch with academic support team as he said that he has already fallen behind in his studies as they may be able to help with managing his time, getting his studies back on track and up to date and his organisation with his studies (UWTSD, ND e). Hopefully, this will help Iwan to feel more confident in his studies again.

3. Dafydd

Dafydd has applied to study my programme next year. Dafydd has cerebral palsy and is partially sighted. He says that he is very independent with his studies but can get tired easily and he struggles taking his own notes. He wants to remain independent in his studies but has asked for advice on his options as a student with me.

First, I had a lengthy conversation with Dafydd about his needs and what support he currently has and what support he would want when coming to university. I signposted him to student support services, who can support him to reach his full potential and provide support strategies to enable his continued independence and build on his self-confidence (UWTSD, ND f). I advised Dafydd that the first step would be with meeting with the disability advisor who can discuss with you the support that is available, for example a note taker to attend lectures with him so that he can focus on the lesson and not worry about taking notes.

I also discussed with Dafydd student finance and the application for disability student's allowance. I advised Dafydd to speak to the money support team and suggested looking at their page on the website to get an idea of what is available to him in the way of financial support for his studies.

Dafydd is able to walk independently with the use of crutches, however we did speak about the access arrangements in the university where I assured him that the campus is fully accessible and inclusive for all learners, and that the disability support team will be able to assist with all aspects of university life, from academics to extra-curricular activities (UWTSD, ND f).

UWTSD has student accommodation in close proximity to the university campus so as Dafydd is planning on living away from home there will be easy access to the campus (UWTSD ND g). The student accommodation also provides communal areas where Dafydd can meet and build relationships with his peers. The university accommodation also provides 24-hour security and staff on site so in the case of an emergency there is support available. I advised Dafydd that the disability support team would be able to provide more information about what accommodation would be available, and best suited, to him.

Finally, I spoke with Dafydd about the UWTSD student union who have a range of diverse groups and societies to suit all different interests. I suggested that this may be an opportunity to meet peers with similar interests to him which will allow him to build his self confidence with this being his first time living away from home. Building a peer support group while at the university could be beneficial to the mental health and wellbeing of Dafydd, building a university community for peer support. This supports the Welsh Government (2023) professional standard "Demonstrate commitment to learners, their learning, safety and well-

being”, as ensuring the well being of the students is an important part of my role as an educator.

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